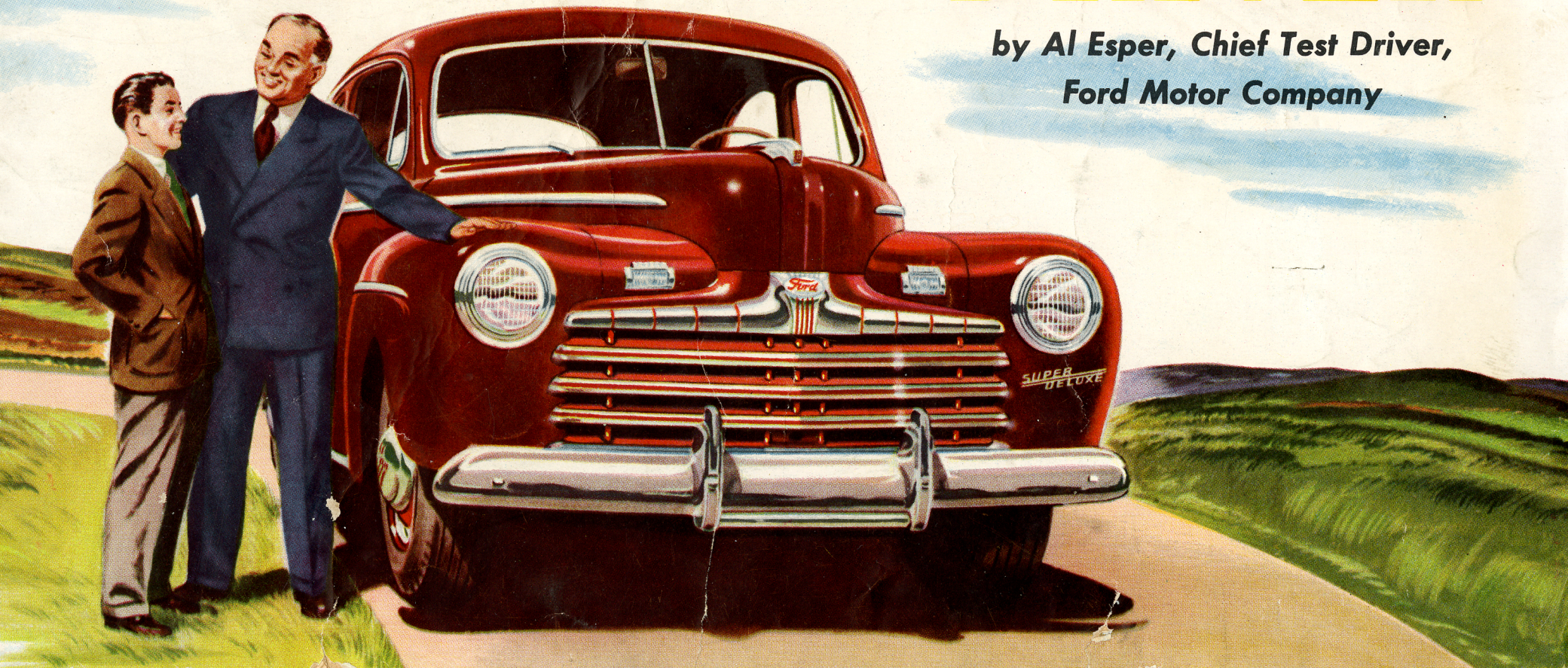
HOW TO BE AN EXPERT DRIVER

by Al Esper, Chief Test Driver,
Ford Motor Company



HOW TO BE AN EXPERT DRIVER

by Al Esper

Chief Test Driver, Ford Motor Company

• It's just as easy to be a *good* driver as a poor one, and it's *much more fun!* All you have to do is remember a few rules, be a good sport, and use your head.

You'll get a great deal of satisfaction from your *expert* driving. You'll feel safe. You'll feel relaxed. And people will admire the way you handle a car. They will trust you with their cars and enjoy riding as your passengers.

Remember that accidents *don't* just happen. They are *caused.* Play it safe and they won't happen to you.

DO OTHERS THINK YOU'RE A GOOD DRIVER?

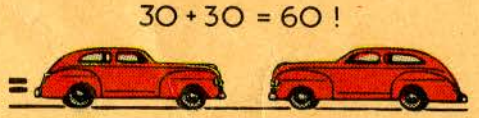
Another thing to remember is that many people think they are good . . . or even *expert* . . . drivers, while they are actually pretty bad drivers. Don't make this mistake and then try to prove your ability—or lack of it—by burning up the highways. Learn to drive so safely that *others* will say: "You're a really good driver!"

IF YOU'RE A BEGINNER

Before you can drive well, you must learn a few basic rules. You must realize that the machine which you are about to operate weighs almost two tons. Going at 30 mph. it can hit an object with the same force as if it were dropped off the roof of a 10-story building.

When you turn a corner, your two-ton load of iron, steel, rubber and human freight wants to keep on going in a straight line. The gripping of your tires on the pavement is all that prevents it.

WHY YOU MUST WATCH YOUR SPEED



You must learn to respect speed. If you're traveling at 30 miles per hour and hit a car approaching at 30 miles per hour, you get the impact of hitting a "brick wall" at a speed of 60 miles per hour. If you're speeding along the road at 60 miles per hour, *it takes 251 feet on dry pavement to stop.* That's almost a city block. If you travel at slower or more *normal* speeds your chances of surviving an emergency are far greater.

FIRST LEARN THE CONTROLS

Your first step in driving is to learn all about the car. Start by having an experienced driver explain the controls.

Then on a safe road he should show you how to change gears, how to put on the brakes.

When you are sure you know what he has shown you, take the wheel yourself. Shift from first to second to high, and then stop. Repeat the process until you can do this smoothly.

As you progress, go into other phases of driving, such as backing up, parking, driving in traffic, and turning on hills. Only when you can do these operations easily are you ready to "solo."

HOW TO HOLD THE WHEEL

While you go through this learning period, don't pick up careless driving habits. Once you get bad habits, they're hard to get rid of.

Hold your steering wheel where you have the best control—left hand at "10 o'clock; right hand at 4." And keep *both* hands on it. You never know when an unexpected bump, a soft spot, or a blowout may try to tear the wheel out of your hands.

WHY YOU SHIFT GEARS

Learn to shift gears correctly—how to work the clutch best. Cars have sets of gears to give three speeds forward, one reverse. In first gear there's maximum power at slow speeds. You use this to get rolling. Second gear delivers full power at intermediate car speeds—it helps you get moving faster. Third, or direct drive, gives full power at higher speeds. It is your cruising gear. These gears are selectively meshed with the engine shaft gears. Shifting from one speed to another while the gears are spinning would cause jamming and broken teeth. That's why you always push in the clutch pedal before shifting. It disconnects the engine from the gears. When you've shifted, you let the clutch pedal out again *slowly*. That joins the engine to the gears and starts them spinning.

LET THE OTHER FELLOW GO FIRST

Never argue with trains, pedestrians or other cars. Before you stick your nose out on a train track, be absolutely sure you're not racing a locomotive. And when it comes to pedestrians, always give them the right of way and the benefit of every doubt. Also, be careful when backing out of your driveway. Do it *slowly* so that even if some child or dog darts across your path, you can stop in time.

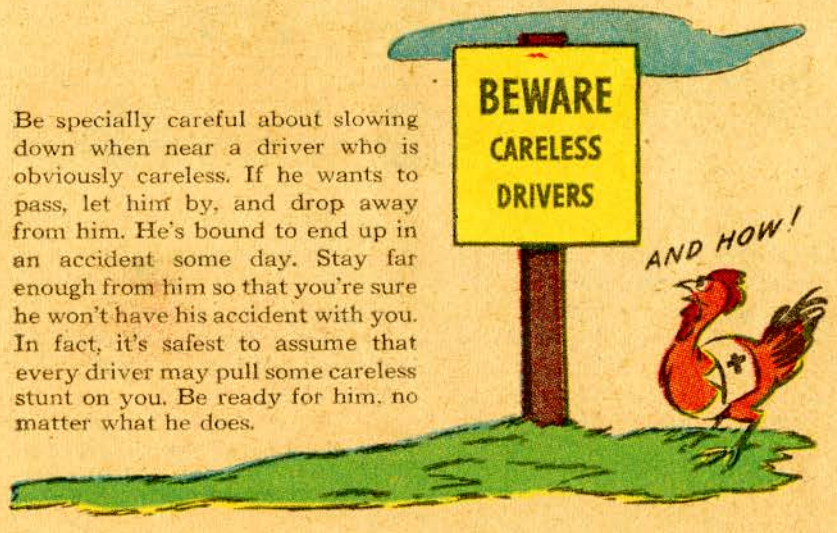
LOOK BEFORE PULLING AWAY FROM CURB

You must always take a second look before pulling away from the curb. Too many fenders are bashed in each year because some driver didn't look. Watch out for such drivers when you're on a crowded street. Never depend on them to see you. Depend on yourself!

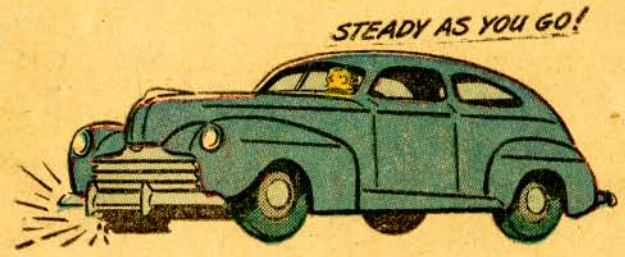
SHOWING OFF DOESN'T PAY

Whatever you do, don't try to impress other drivers or your friends by showing off on the road. You'll just make a fool of yourself every time. Turns "on two wheels," "weaving" in-and-out through traffic, racing "in formation" on the open highway, tire-squeaking stops, and needless risks tag you immediately. To the experienced driver, such a performance marks you as a reckless fool. And some day you may pay for your recklessness in an accident which you'll always regret.

Be specially careful about slowing down when near a driver who is obviously careless. If he wants to pass, let him by, and drop away from him. He's bound to end up in an accident some day. Stay far enough from him so that you're sure he won't have his accident with you. In fact, it's safest to assume that every driver may pull some careless stunt on you. Be ready for him, no matter what he does.

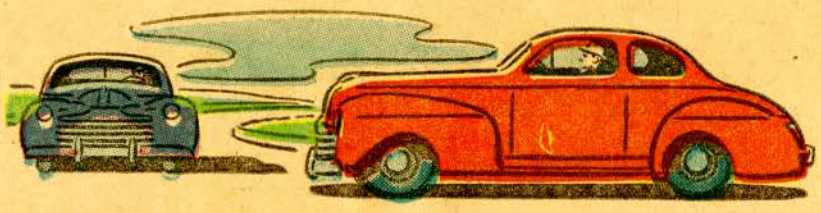


DON'T BLOW UP OVER A BLOWOUT



In case of blowouts, grip the steering wheel firmly. Keep the car "on course" and apply the brakes very gently. Do the same thing if you drop off the concrete edge onto the soft shoulder of the road. In this case, when you've slowed down enough, cut sharply back on the road.

MOST OF ALL—COURTESY!

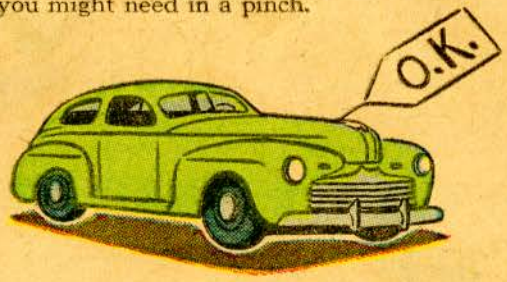


Probably the most important thing of all to remember, and practise, when behind the wheel is *courtesy*. A really expert, experienced driver is a courteous one, with a high regard for the rights of others. Courteous driving is safe driving—yielding the right of way whenever there is the slightest doubt; being constantly alert for pedestrians no matter what the lights may say; thinking of the other fellow.

As a matter of fact, if most of us would be as courteous to others when we are *in our cars* as we are when we are out of them, we'd be all right. So learn the "courtesies of the road," practise them always and be proud of your part in maintaining them.

DRIVE A SAFE CAR

No matter how safely you drive, you must have a safe car, too. Make sure your brakes, steering mechanism, and tires won't let you down. And when it comes to the purchase of a car, look for brakes that are big enough to handle smoothly the weight of the car. Make sure the body will protect you in accidents. And be sure that the engine has all the power you might need in a pinch.

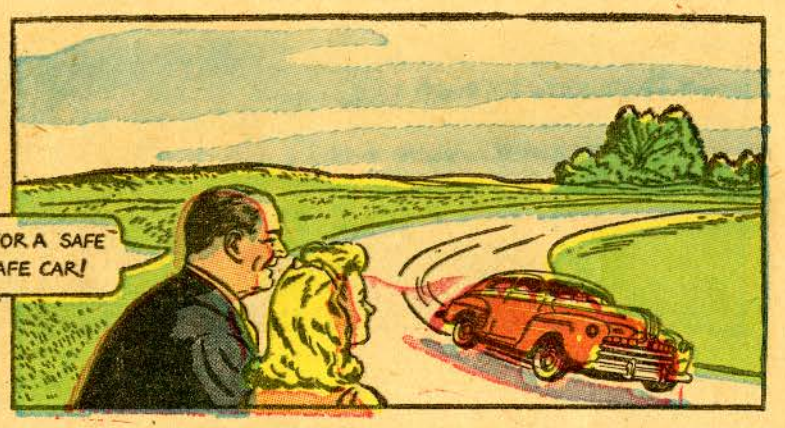


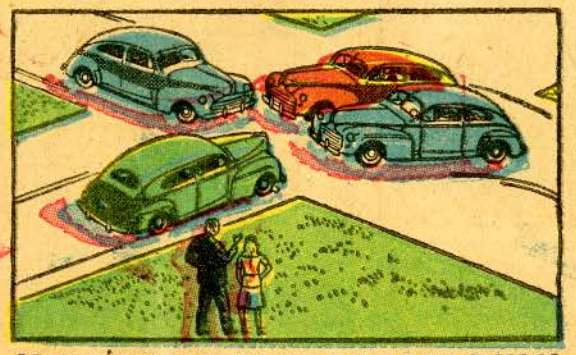
IT'S EASY TO BE AN EXPERT

So you see that it's really easy to be an expert. All you have to do is remember to take no chances, to control your car smoothly, to keep alert, and to practise courtesy always!

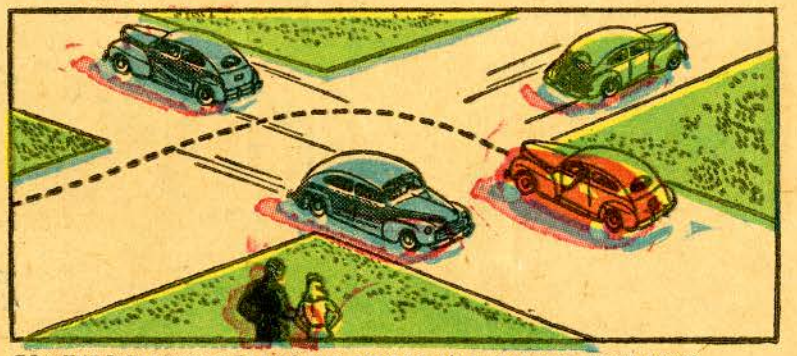
Now let's look at some pictures to show you some of the important things you have to know to be an expert driver—

FORD'S CHIEF TEST DRIVER Al Esper does a GOOD TURN for Dot





AL: THAT'S RIGHT, DOT. IT COULD EVEN HIT ALL THREE OF THEM. THIS IS WHAT COULD HAPPEN!



AL: THE RIGHT WAY IS TO HUG THE CENTER LINE, PUT OUT YOUR HAND, AND WAIT UNTIL THE ROAD IS COMPLETELY CLEAR. THEN TURN LEFT.

• One sure sign of an expert driver is the way he makes a left or a right *turn*.

In turning to the left, be so close to the center of the road that no car behind can pass on your left without going over on the wrong side of the road.

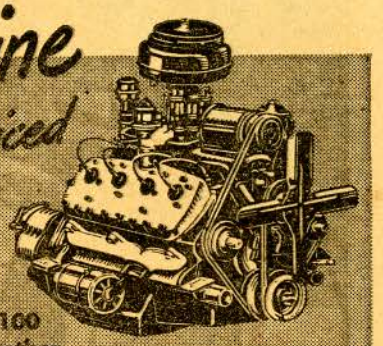
In turning to the right, leave no room for cars to pass on your right side.

Be sure to signal, too. Shift early so that both hands will be free for the wheel.

Then approach the corner slowly. Wait for your opening. And move through carefully.

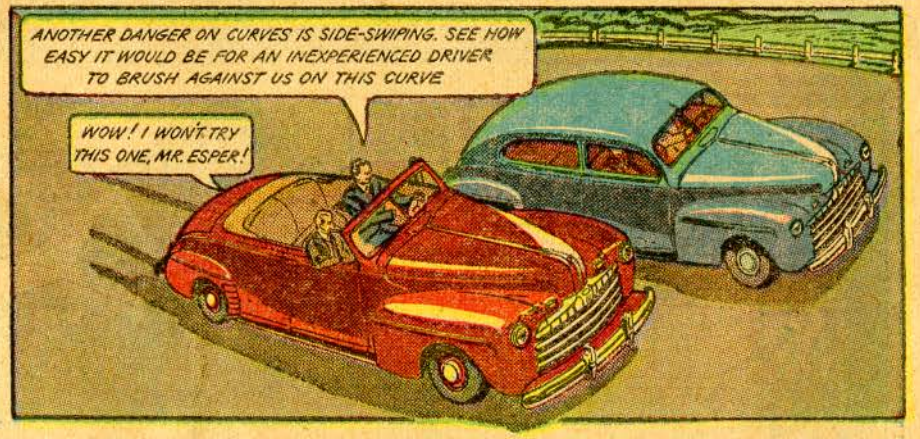
Whatever you do, don't cut across too many lanes and get in the way of oncoming cars. And when you approach a blind corner—with or without traffic lights—never make your turn without watching for cars coming from all directions.

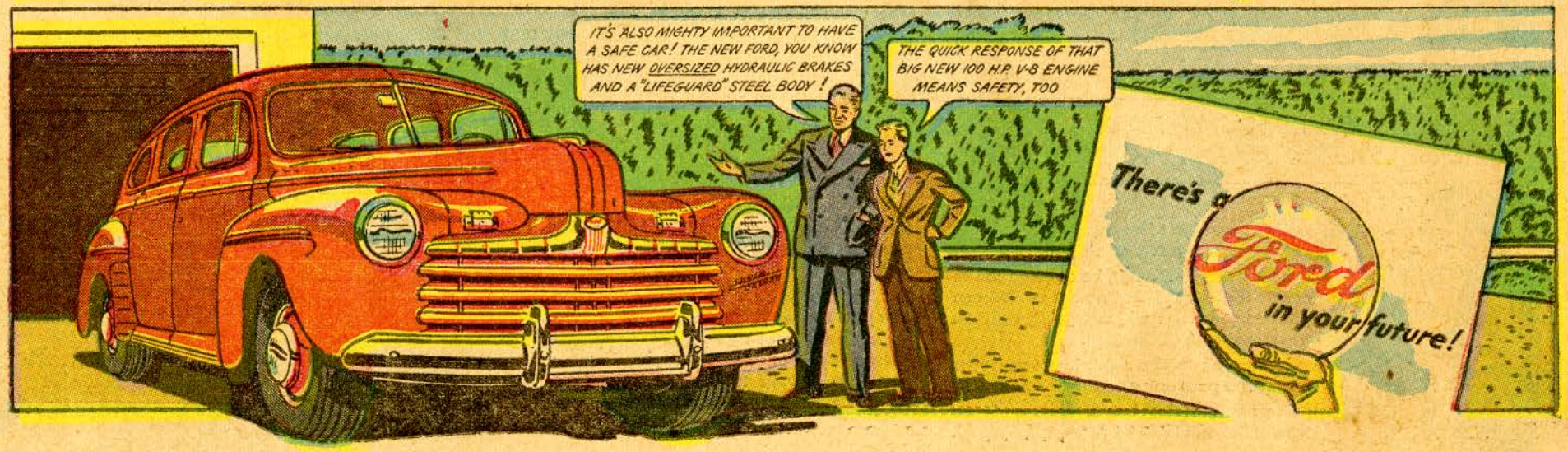
The only V-8 Engine in the low-priced field!

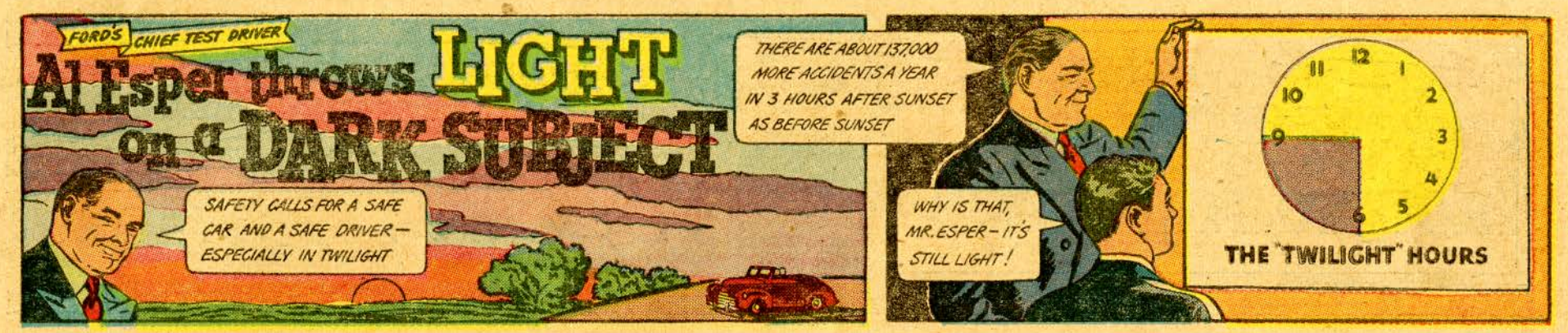


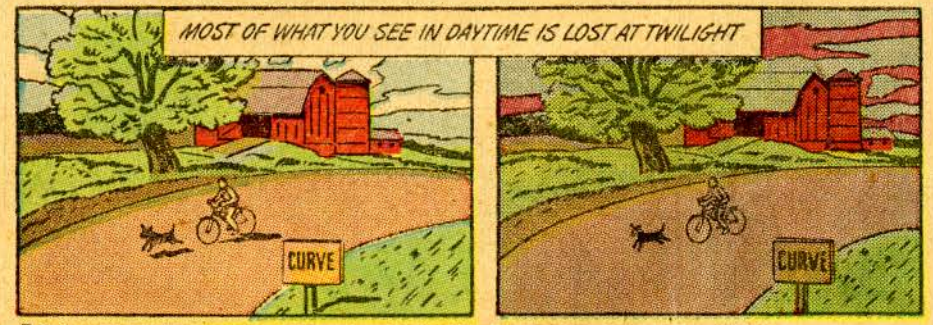
No other car in Ford's class has 100 horsepower. No other has a V-type engine. No other has 8 cylinders. And this new Ford also has 4-ring aluminum pistons for gas and oil economy.

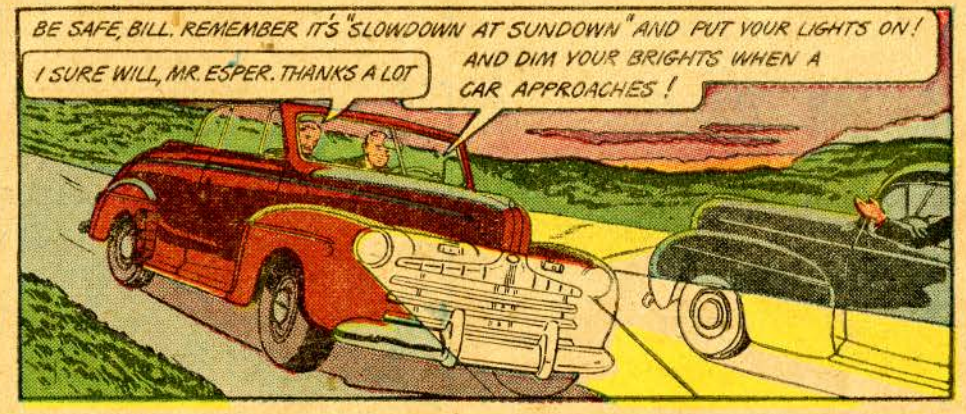
Bob makes a SAFETY RUN with AL ESPER





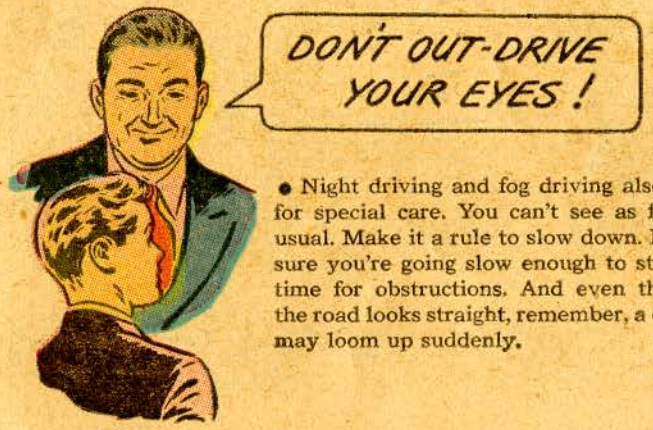






AL: YOU THINK YOU SEE IN TWILIGHT — BUT YOU CAN SEE ONLY HALF AS WELL. BESIDES, YOU'RE TIRED AT NIGHT.

BILL: GEE, I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT! YOU'RE RIGHT!

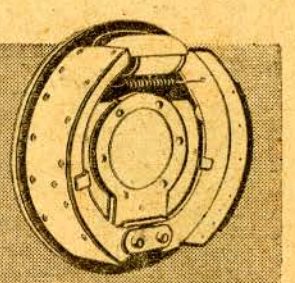


• Night driving and fog driving also call for special care. You can't see as far as usual. Make it a rule to slow down. Make sure you're going slow enough to stop in time for obstructions. And even though the road looks straight, remember, a curve may loom up suddenly.

If you have to drive a long distance, you should try to have a relief driver along. Driving all the way by yourself, you may doze off at the wheel. If you are forced to make such a trip, plan to pull to the side of the road for a short nap whenever you feel too tired for safe driving.

And be particularly careful on good, straight roads. They are more treacherous for the tired driver than a winding or rough road, for the latter keeps him awake. But smooth, straight roads develop a monotonous hum which can make you doze off one second too long.

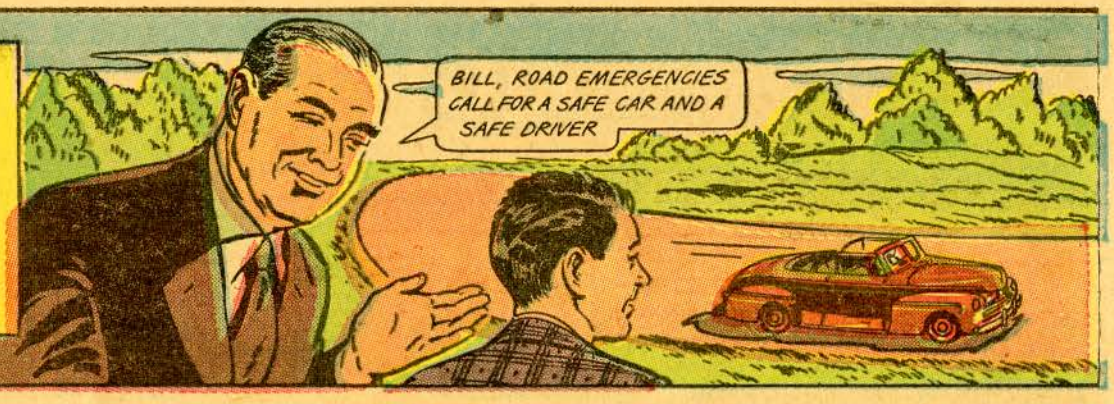
These New HYDRAULIC BRAKES are Oversized

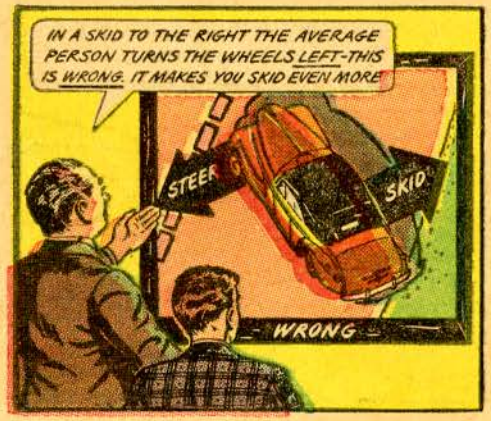


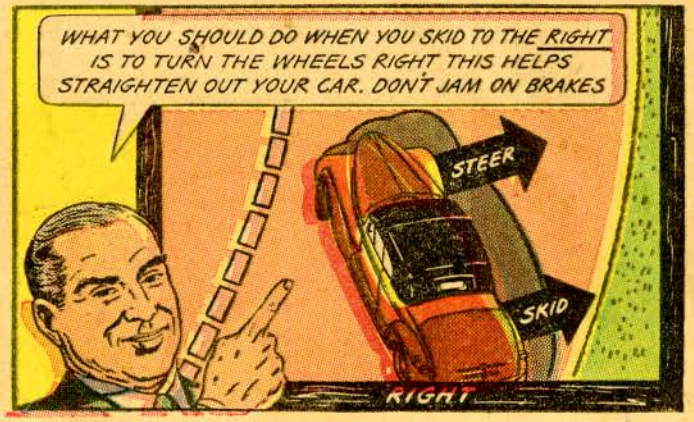
The new Ford has brakes big enough to stop a car of twice the weight. They are also self-centering which means faster steps, smoother stops and longer life for the brake linings!

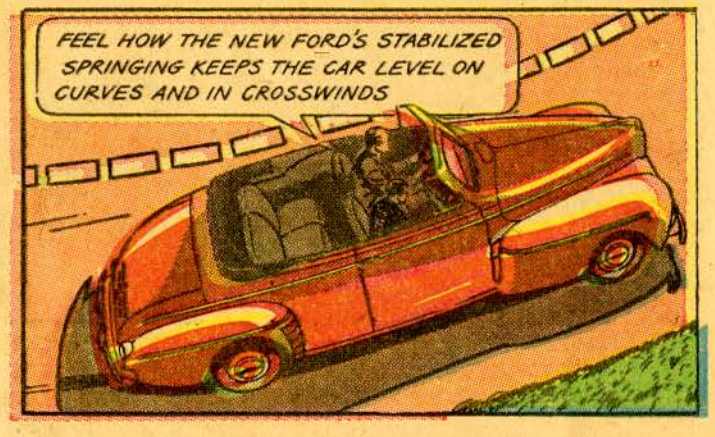
FORD'S CHIEF TEST DRIVER

Al Esper tells Bill
HOW TO STOP A SKID





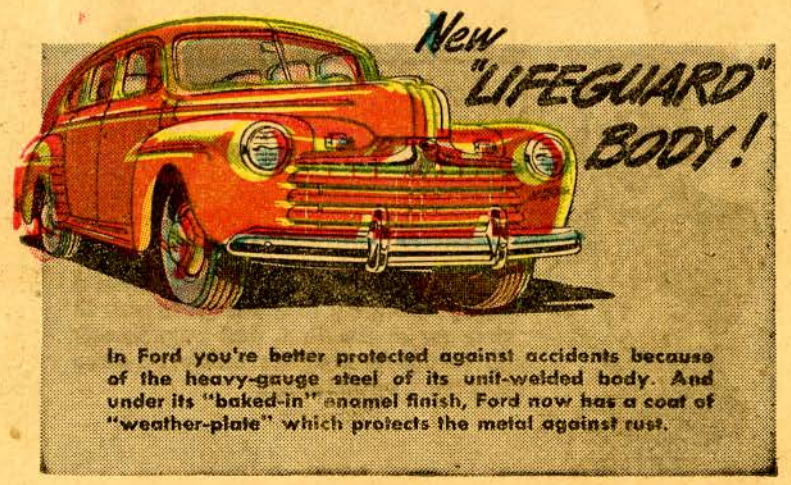


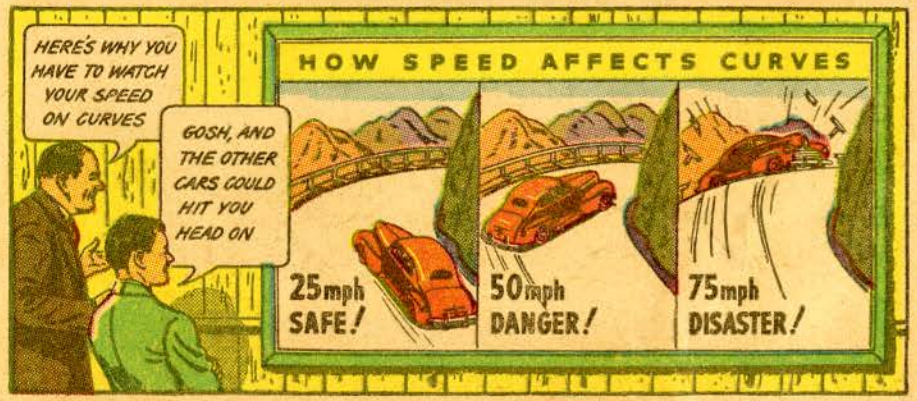


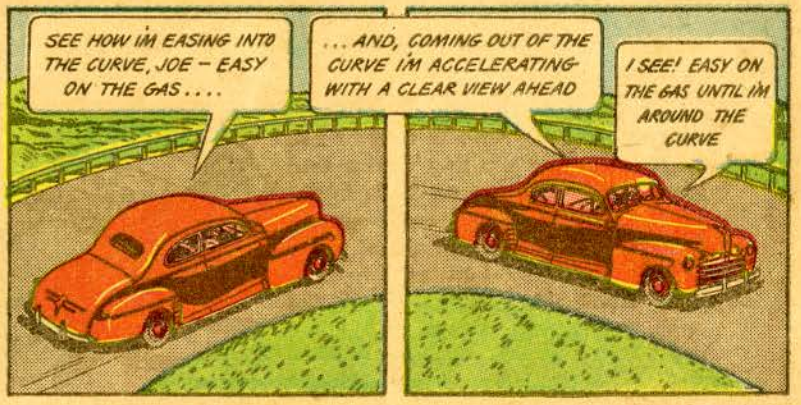
AND HERE'S HOW TO AVOID SKIDS

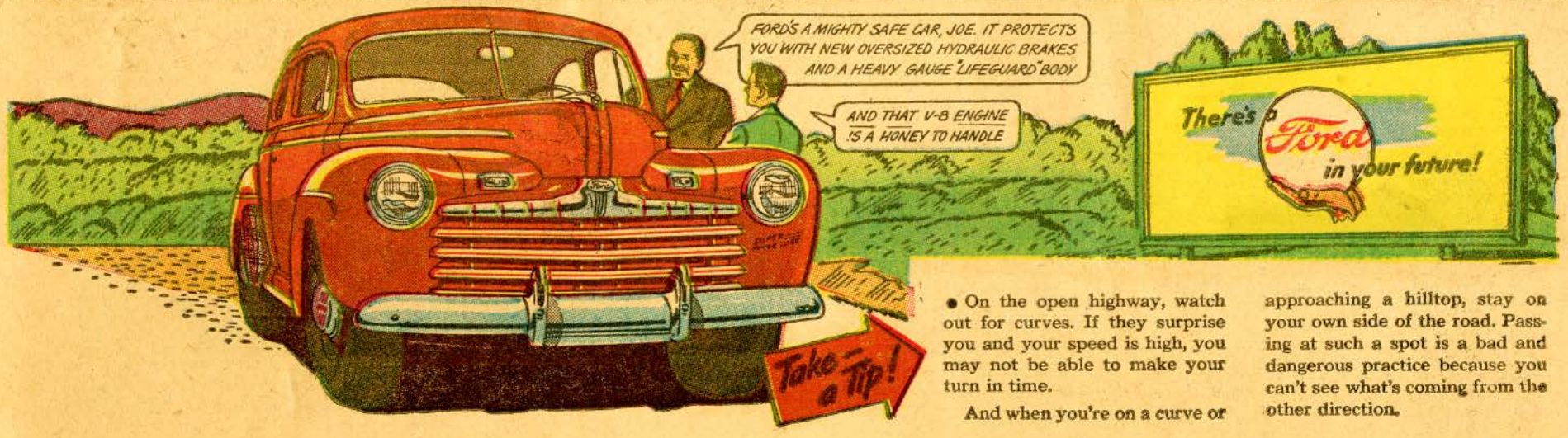
• On a slippery surface, allow more distance for stops and use your engine as a brake whenever possible. Try to avoid quick, sharp movements of the steering wheel. Bear in mind that if you go into a curve too fast the front tires may not grip the road well enough to enable the wheels to follow the road. This results in a highly dangerous skid.

In a skid you should try to avoid letting your car spin in the road. If your rear end starts to slide to the right, turn your front end to the right also. This tends to revolve the weight of the car around its central point and swing the slipping rear end back where it came from. It also prevents the car's doing one of those wild spins in the middle of the street. Keep your front end going in the same direction the rear end is sliding. Keep cool and don't apply the clutch or brake pedals.









• On the open highway, watch out for curves. If they surprise you and your speed is high, you may not be able to make your turn in time.

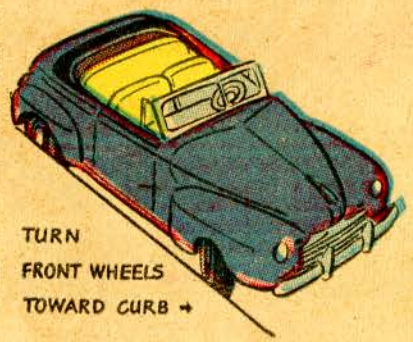
And when you're on a curve or approaching a hilltop, stay on your own side of the road. Passing at such a spot is a bad and dangerous practice because you can't see what's coming from the other direction.

GET OUT ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Sure, it's easier to hop out on the left especially if you're driving. But it's a lot more dangerous. Chances are you haven't looked to see what's coming from the rear and in any case the other fellow doesn't *expect* you to get out on the left. Get out on the right—the curb side and see that your passengers do likewise. You'll live longer!

WHEN PARKING ON A HILL

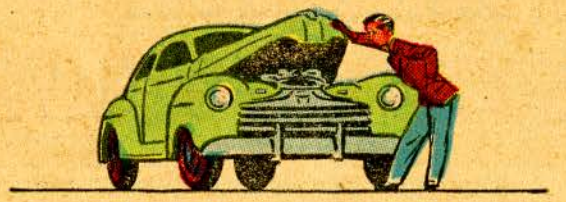
If you're parking on a *downgrade* turn your front wheels *toward* the curb, set your parking brake and leave your car *in gear*. This is the only sure way to prevent your car from rolling when you're not in it! And, if you park on an *upgrade*, turn your front wheels *away* from the curb, set your parking brake and leave your car *in gear*. Even though the road is slippery, the curb will stop the car.



DON'T FIGHT WITH YOUR "BRIGHTS!"

When an approaching car blinds you with bright lights, *don't* blind him with yours to get even. He may not even realize he has his "brights" on. The thing to do is *dim* yours at once and the chances are he'll do the same. And speaking of bright lights, don't use them for city driving. You may get a ticket and you may have a crash. Your "brights" are for the open road on a dark night.

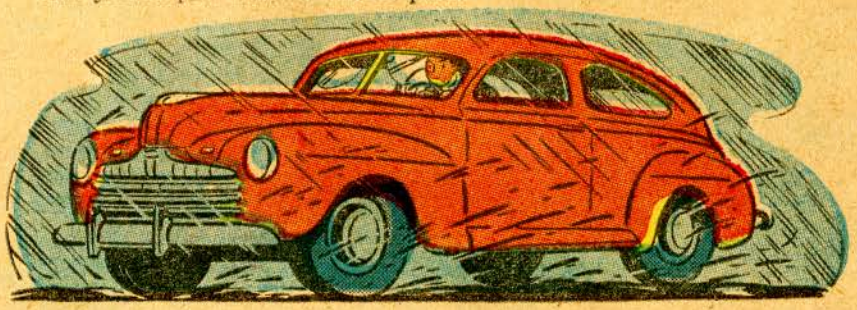
KEEP YOUR CAR IN TUNE



The Army Air Forces found out that the only safe plane was a well serviced plane. The same thing is true with cars. Keep your brakes adjusted properly at all times and keep an eye on the linings particularly. Check your tire pressure once a week—improper inflation is dangerous. Lubricate regularly. Keep your motor tuned, your plugs clean!

VISIBILITY—MOST IMPORTANT!

Make sure your windshield wipers really do their job instead of smearing a fog of road dust when it rains! Keep your windshield clean between times—a rag is a good thing to carry in your glove compartment. And make sure your rear window and rear view mirror are also clean. Adjust the rear view mirror for widest view—and *use* it every time you stop or make a turn or park!



FORM NO. 7071

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